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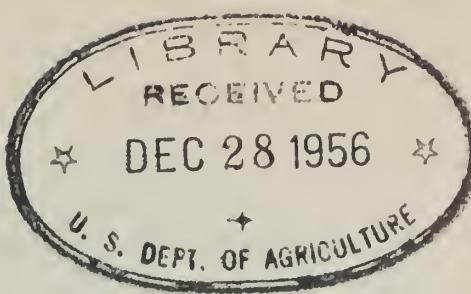


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COMMERCIAL BROILER PRODUCTION

Commercial Broiler and Fryer production has expanded rapidly in recent years. In 1955 over one billion chickens were raised and sold by specialized broiler growers in the United States.

There are 22 States covered by a weekly chick placement report. These States produced a total of 944 million birds and about 2,879 pounds of meat in 1955-- 3 percent more than 1954. These states raised 87% of the total crop of broilers in 1954.

Georgia led all States having raised about 178 million birds followed by Texas with 79 million, Arkansas with 77 million, Delaware with 70 million, North Carolina with 60 million, Maryland and Alabama with 58 million birds each. The average price received for the 1955 production was 25.1 cents per pound live weight, compared with 22.9 cents in 1954. Gross income from sales in these 22 states was \$722,170,000-- 12 percent more than in 1954.

The American housewife demands a clean carcass with no pinfeathers. The poultry buyers have shown a decided preference for white-feathered birds because of savings in the dressing process. White feathered live birds sell higher. The poultry breeders and hatchery operators have responded to this demand by using a white-feathered variety of the breed, such as the White Plymouth Rock, or by developing a Dominant White strain that can be mated with birds that have colored feathers and produce white or near white baby chicks. This cross breeding practice is very popular with broiler growers. All broiler chicks are bred for rapid growth and good livability. The New Hampshire breed has been used widely in past years but has lost some of its popularity because of the red color. Large numbers of New Hampshire hens are now used with Dominant White males. New broiler type breeds have been developed and improved such as the Silver and White Cornish, White Americans and Delawares. In 1946 Nation-Wide "Chicken of Tomorrow" contests were started and this movement has done much to stimulate the development of meat-type birds.

The broiler growers have adopted many poultry husbandry management practices that are different from other poultry raising systems. Mass production methods call for large houses and large flocks. Houses vary in width from 20 to 70 feet and many extend hundreds of feet long. Floor space per bird varies from 3/4 to 1 square foot each.

In one area a single worker, with part-time assistance from his wife, will brood and feed 40,000 chickens. In this case, a central heating system supplies heat. All feed is delivered direct to the house and placed in overhead bins by special trucks built to handle bulk feeds. It is distributed to the chicks by a gravity flow into mechanical feeders. Water fountains are automatic with a special attachment for medication and heating if desired. A clean-up crew removes the manure and replaces the litter after the chicks are sold.

Broiler raisers seldom mix two ages of chicks together but in some cases the pullets and cockerels are sexed and raised in separate pens. Most broilers are raised in the confinement of the house and not given outside range. A special broiler starting and growing feed is kept before the birds at all times, dim lights are frequently kept burning all night with bright lights either in the morning or late at night to insure a 12 to 14 hour feeding day.

A great variety of methods are used for brooding with wood, coal, oil, gas and electricity supplying the heat. All seem to be satisfactory providing they are economical and keep the chick warm enough so it can eat and drink freely and comfortably.

Most successful broiler farms follow a clearly defined sanitation and vaccination program. This varies with different locations and your own State authorities can best prescribe for your conditions. Vaccination for Newcastle, fowl pox and bronchitis are most common.

The average weight of birds sold varies with different regions. In Maine and Connecticut for example, the 1955 average weight was 3-1/2 pounds or over -- while in South Carolina and Georgia the weight ran slightly under 3 pounds. The average sized fryer sold in California was 3.3 pounds.

The modern broiler chick is a very efficient user of grain and concentrate supplements. Since such birds grow faster they require less feed per pound of gain. We now grow a 3 pound bird in 9 weeks when formerly it took 12 weeks. The newer knowledge of nutrition has taught the mixer howto combine the ingredients in the proper proportion to make a balanced feed. Modern broiler formulas use only 2-1/2 to 3 pounds of feed to produce a pound of poultry meat while formerly 3-1/2 to 5 pounds was necessary. The broiler chick today leads all other farm animals in efficiency meat of production.

